invariably in straight lines, with long double rows of attached houses, exactly alike, and frequently to unite under one design, in the form of terraces, a number of dwelling-houses, giving to a dozen or more of such the appearance of one large mansion or palace. The object of the following paper is to show that these and some other practices have not been adopted in conformity with correct principle. With respect to the straight line, its use, I apprehend, originated in a just aversion to the crooked, jagged, tortuous forms, with sudden (almost right-angled) bends, so much reprehended in the old cities, and under the impression, on the part of the projectors, that by introducing a form the antithesis of all these, they would doubtless be right. In other words, the re-action in favour of a better practice was not attended by a due consideration of the laws upon which beauty depends. They took the course diametrically opposite to the rejected one, instead of instituting an inquiry into natural principles. In the practice of invariably joining houses together, and putting them in "uniform," principles everywhere manifested in nature have been unheeded, viz., individuality and diversity. Between human habitations and human beings an analogy exists, and if we look into nature in reference to the latter, we find a plan pursued very different to that of builders; nature never loses sight of individuality; she does not occasionally usher into the world, to lighten, as it were, her task of invention, half a dozen or a dozen men, exactly alike in size, form, and feature—fac-similes of each other; and we should shrink with horror at the sight of a dozen corporeally attached men; yet the practices to which I have alluded in reference to houses, are no less opposed to the dictates of good taste and enlightened judgment than such phenomena would be to the usual course of nature. In short, it cannot be disputed, if we follow the analogy of nature, that in dwelling-houses, as in the human species, there should be individuality, and that houses for different persons to inhabit should be of different designs, if not suiting the varied tastes of the occupants, at least symbolising the peculiarities of human character; and, in reference to street formation, that every house should not only be a picture in itself, but that the houses collectively should form a picture of greater variety, and that they should be, where possible, arranged with respect to composition, light and shade, breadth, colour, union and harmony with the ground, variety, and other qualities, just as a skilful artist composes his picture.

We shall, however, look in vain for the highest attributes of street perspective in the straight line, however beautiful and varied the buildings, individually, may be; that continuity of charm, or series of fine effects, of which a street is capable, cannot, I consider, be given to a straight line, however great the means employed. I am not insensible to the graces of columnar perspective as exhibited in an avenue formed by colonnades, whether interior or exterior. The long drawn aisle also of our Gothic cathedrals awakens ideas of the sublime. Than the vista of the pointed nave, continued by that of the choir, combined with chantries, screens, and shrines, nothing can be imagined more overwhelming in effect, or more in keeping with the sacred destination of the edifice. They symbolise infinity, and are productive of mysterious and sublime sensations. I mention these, because I have heard them cited in support of the straight line in reference to streets; but the office of such, I consider, is confined to a surprise—to a single and occasional view,—and look upon that office as fulfilled when they have produced their first overwhelming effect upon the spectator, to which end every means has been directed. Whilst streets, on the contrary, are for promenade and constant use, and a succession of effects and ideas are required.

The line I would suggest as most conducive to this, is one in which nature may be said to revel, viz. the winding serpentine line of a very gentle sweep; or the simple arc of a circle. Streets so formed, I consider, would not only be susceptible of the highest architectural beauty, but possess that exhaustless charm, that endless variety of effects which I have endeavoured to describe.

It will be understood, I trust, that I do not recommend these curves for the beauty of the lines themselves, as in a picture,—their own immediate beauty could not appear, except upon the map; the merit of the curve consists in its continually altering the point of view, and in the variety and beauty it thus produces. In such streets, the spectator of intellect and susceptibility would find a continued development of beauty, and as the disposition of light and shade, and atmospheric effect, is never the same for two minutes together, the variety will seem infinite, the pleasure endless; whilst on the other hand, a straight street flanked on either side by columns, however lavishly the riches of architecture may have been expended on it, must soon, not only cease to please but grow wearisome to the eye.

The mathematical fact that the straight line is the shortest distance between two points, cannot, I consider, be urged against this in reference to utility. In giving a winding line to a leading thoroughfare running through a town, as a trunk for branch streets, no ground would be lost. The gentle curvature which I recommend, would make but little difference in the length, and the passenger would be recompensed for a longer walk by its containing a proportionately greater number of shops or places of business, while its devious course would enable it to embrace a greater number of distinct points or localities necessary to be united.

I do not insist, however, upon the curve as a form that should be invariably employed; there are circumstances under which the straight line would be more proper. In short streets, for instance, running from one great thoroughfare to another, the latter form would be most befitting, as no purpose could be answered by the curve. *Width* is the chief means of giving effect to these. Neither can the detached principle be insisted upon, except in streets where magnificence is the leading aim. The high value of land in the centre of a town would forbid it. What I would invariably insist upon, is the detaching of character—individualizing the houses; and, after all, that is the most important point, as it immediately produces the great desideratum—variety; while the other qualities for which I contend, do it in but an indirect manner.

To a curved street, distinct character to the houses is an advantage which should not be dispensed with; it is requisite to the full development of that variety which the eye requires, but in a straight street it is *absolutely necessary*, as an escape from the most wearisome and complete monotony: in such a street the houses should present every variety of form, size, hue, style, and design, and thus produce the greatest possible change of sky-line.

There are four streets in the city of Oxford that will serve as examples here—two ancient and modern; of either kind one is curved, the other straight; in the ancient ones the houses vary in character, in the modern ones they are all alike. To any unprejudiced mind that examines and compares the several effects of these streets, the general truth of the remarks I have made, will, I think, be apparent, without further comment of mine.*

I am aware that the projectors of modern streets in adopting the straight line have had ample precedent. If we turn to the great cities of ancient and modern times, which have been executed throughout or for the most part upon a complete and digested plan, we find, though magnificence has been the leading aim, that this principle has been followed. Babylon, as I have said before, was built in straight lines, each street crossing the other at right angles. It had, however, one quality conducive to the pictorial—the houses were detached.

In Washington, evidently intended by its founders to unite in its plan all the beauties of which a city is capable, the same principle has guided, though in many respects it is an advance upon Babylon and others: besides its intersection by the principal streets running due north and south, from the president's house, the capitol, and other important points of the city, run diagonal streets, east and west, connecting them with other ornamental and imposing objects, which with the former close the perspective at either end: this arrangement is well worthy of notice, it tends greatly to promote diversity of view, and is highly conducive to grandeur of general effect. There are open areas at the intersection of the principal streets, formed into various regular figures, destined for the reception of statues and obelisks to their eminent men; the great leading streets are 160 feet wide, with not only a foot walk and carriage way, but also a gravel walk, planted with trees on each side. St. Giles's-street, Oxford, in all probability suggested this arrangement.

The streets of Philadelphia, and of most of the new towns of America, are straight and cross each other at right angles.

In Rome, some of the principal streets are of considerable length, and by dint of churches, palaces, and fountains, have an imposing effect: the Corso, which contains several palaces ranging in a line with the houses, is perhaps the finest; but the streets are perfectly straight. The streets of the principal towns of the Romans were straight, and Tacitus informs us that for protection from the sun they are so narrow that Pompeii was called a city of lanes. Antinõe, built by Adrian, and considered a perfect model of the Roman city, had its streets straight. The principal ones had on each side of the way piazzas 5 or 6 feet broad, and running the whole length of the street, by means of which the city from one end to the other might be traversed without exposure to rain, or to the heat of the sun.

In Mexico, almost entirely rebuilt after its conquest by the Spaniards, the streets are straight, and so regularly arranged, that, if uniformity were identical with beauty, it would perhaps bear the palm over all other cities.

I can, however, refer to cities whose chief beauty may be traced to the agency of the principles for which I am contending. The amphitheatrical form of Naples is evidently the secret of its beauty, and no street in Washington, Rome, or in any other city, where the straight line prevails, can vie with the Strada di Toledo, or with the beautiful streets upon the bay.

Venice also, beautiful as a dream, may be cited for the same reason. The Grand Canal, of an expansive width, takes a serpentine course through the sea-girt city. The view from the Rialto along this canal, flanked on either side by the most gorgeous palaces, churches, domes, and spires, with their sculptured arabesques, and purple marble, where the beauties of art as reflected on the pictures of Claude and Canaletti and our own Turner stand forth as rivals to those of nature, must, to those who are capable of appreciating the glories of sunshine and shadow, have an effect that words are inadequate to describe. "Detail after detail," says an eloquent writer, "thought beyond thought, you find and feel them through the radiant mystery, inexhaustible as indistinct, beautiful but never all revealed, secret in fulness, confused in symmetry as nature herself is to the bewildered and foiled glance, giving out of that indistinctness and through that confusion, the perpetual newness of the infinite and the beautiful."

But I have an example to refer to nearer home, in the interesting city of Oxford beforementioned, where though architectural beauties meet the eye at every step, and there is perhaps a greater amount of architectural wealth, in proportion to its size, than in any other city of the kingdom,—though colleges, churches, and halls are the chief objects in the view, the whole charm may be traced to that wonderful variety of form, hue, disposition, and style, that harmony with nature, and obedience to her laws, which is seen around.

The High-street, like the Grand Canal, is an embodiment of Hogarth's line of beauty. It is of a gentle flexuous curve, meandering through the city, and exhibiting beauties confessedly beyond what any other European city can boast; beauties which have at least been felt by Wordsworth, who in a sonnet on Oxford, forgets not the "stream-like windings of that glorious street." "Sweeping along," observes an old writer, "in a gentle curve of a most expansive width, and bordered by a picturesque assemblage of public and private edifices, it is indeed, perhaps, without a rival. In viewing it the eye does not repose on splendid uniformity, but on an enchantingly varied whole, and when, satisfied with viewing the entire perspective, we commence an examina-

* The four streets of Oxford are, High-street, St. Giles's-street, Beaumont-street, St. John-street.

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